

CHAPTER 3

SECTION 1.6C

LIVER TRANSPLANTATION

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I. CPT¹ PROCEDURE CODES

47133 - 47136, [47140 - 47142](#)

II. POLICY

A. Depending upon the date of admission and the beneficiary residence, liver transplantation is subject to the requirements of the Specialized Treatment Service (STS) program. For these requirements, see OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)).

1. Beneficiaries who reside in a liver transplant STS facility (STSF) catchment area and are in need of a liver transplantation, must be evaluated by that facility before receiving a liver transplantation. See OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)).

2. If the liver transplantation cannot be performed at an STSF, an STSF NAS (or an authorization) will be issued, reference OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)).

NOTE: For admissions on or after September 23, 1996, an STSF NAS is not required for TRICARE PRIME enrollees even when these beneficiaries use the point of service (POS) option. For such admissions the enrollees are required to obtain an authorization from the Health Care Finder.

3. Effective September 23, 1996, if liver transplantation cannot be performed in an STSF for TRICARE PRIME enrollees, such beneficiaries will be referred to the Health Care Finder for issuance of an authorization, reference OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)).

4. The STS program for liver transplants for Regions 1, 2, and 5 at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center will be terminated as of June 1, 2003. The STSF NAS and authorization requirements of [paragraph II.A.](#) will not apply to admissions on or after June 1, 2003.

B. Benefits are allowed for liver and living-related donor liver transplantations (LRDLT).

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1. A TRICARE Prime enrollee must have a referral from his/her Primary Care Manager (PCM) and an authorization from the Health Care Finder (HCF) before obtaining transplant-related services. If network providers furnish transplant-related services without prior PCM referral and HCF authorization, penalties will be administered according to TRICARE network provider agreements. If Prime enrollees receive health care services from non-network civilian providers without the required PCM referral and HCF authorization, MCS contractors shall reimburse charges for the services on a Point of Service basis. Special cost-sharing requirements apply to Point of Service claims.

2. For Standard and Extra patients residing in an MCS region, preauthorization is the responsibility of the MCS Medical Director, Health Care Finder or other designated utilization staff.

3. For admissions prior to September 1, 1999, an STSF NAS is not required for LRDLTs. For admissions between September 1, 1999 through May 31, 2003, an STSF NAS (or an authorization) is required for LRDLT subject to the provisions in OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)).

C. Liver and LRDLT is covered when the transplantation is performed at a TRICARE or Medicare-**certified** liver transplantation center **or TRICARE-certified pediatric consortium liver transplantation center** for beneficiaries who:

1. Are suffering from irreversible hepatic disease; and
2. Have exhausted alternative medical and surgical treatments and
3. Are approaching the terminal phase of their illness.

4. Demonstrate plans for a long-term adherence to a disciplined medical regimen are feasible and realistic.

D. Liver and LRDLT transplants performed for beneficiaries suffering from irreversible hepatic disease resulting from hepatitis B or C is covered.

E. Services and supplies related to liver and LRDLTs are covered for:

1. Evaluation of a potential candidate's suitability for liver transplantation whether or not the patient is ultimately accepted as a candidate for transplantation.

2. Pre- and post-transplantation inpatient hospital and outpatient services.

3. Pre- and postoperative services of the transplantation team.

4. The donor acquisition team, including the costs of transportation to the location of the donor organ and transportation of the team and the donated organ to the location of the transplantation center.

5. The maintenance of the viability of the donor organ after all existing legal requirements for excision of the donor organ have been met.

6. Donor costs.
7. Blood and blood products.
8. FDA approved immunosuppression drugs to include off-label uses when reliable evidence documents that the off-label use is safe, effective and in accordance with nationally accepted standards of practice in the medical community (proven).
9. Complications of the transplantation procedure, including inpatient care, management of infection and rejection episodes.
10. Periodic evaluation and assessment of the successfully transplanted patient.
11. Hepatitis B and pneumococcal vaccines for patients undergoing transplantation.
12. DNA-HLA tissue typing determining histocompatibility.
13. Transportation of the patient by air ambulance and the services of a certified life support attendant.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. For beneficiaries who reside in TRICARE regions but fail to obtain preauthorization for liver or LRDLT, benefits may be extended if the services or supplies otherwise would qualify for benefits but for the failure to obtain preauthorization. If preauthorization is not received, the appropriate preauthorizing authority is responsible for reviewing the claims to determine whether the beneficiary's condition meets the clinical criteria for the transplantation. TRICARE Prime enrollees who failed to obtain preauthorization will be reimbursed only under Point of Service rules.

B. Benefits will only be allowed for transplantations performed at a TRICARE or Medicare-certified liver transplantation center. **Benefits are also allowed for transplants performed at a pediatric facility that is TRICARE-certified as a liver transplantation center on the basis that the center belongs to a pediatric consortium program whose combined experience and survival data meet the TRICARE criteria for certification.** The contractor in whose jurisdiction the center is located is the certifying authority for TRICARE authorization as a liver transplantation center. Refer to [Chapter 10, Section 7.1](#) for organ transplantation center certification requirements.

C. Liver transplantation will be paid under the DRG.

D. Claims for transportation of the donor organ and transplantation team shall be adjudicated on the basis of billed charges, but not to exceed the transport service's published schedule of charges, and cost-shared on an inpatient basis. Scheduled or chartered transportation may be cost-shared.

E. Charges made by the donor hospital will be cost-shared on an inpatient basis and must be fully itemized and billed by the transplantation center in the name of the TRICARE patient.

F. Acquisition and donor costs are not considered to be components of the services covered under the DRG. These costs must be billed separately on a standard UB-92 claim form in the name of the TRICARE patient.

G. When a properly preauthorized transplantation candidate is discharged less than 24 hours after admission because of extenuating circumstances, such as the available organ is found not suitable or other circumstances which prohibit the transplantation from being timely performed, all otherwise authorized services associated with the admission shall be cost-shared on an inpatient basis, since the expectation at admission was that the patient would remain more than 24 hours.

H. Liver or LRDLT performed on an emergency basis in an unauthorized liver transplantation facility may be cost shared only when the following conditions have been met:

1. The unauthorized center must consult with the nearest TRICARE or Medicare-certified liver transplantation center regarding the transplantation case;
2. It must be determined and documented by the transplantation team physician(s) at the certified liver transplantation center that transfer of the patient (to the certified liver transplantation center) is not medically reasonable, even though transplantation is feasible and appropriate; and
3. All other TRICARE contractual requirements have been met.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. Liver transplantation and LRDLT is excluded when any of the following contraindications exist:

1. Significant systemic or multisystemic disease (other than hepatorenal failure) which limits the possibility of full recovery and may compromise the function of the newly transplanted organs.

2. Active alcohol or other substance abuse.

a. Benefits may be allowed if:

(1) The patient has been abstinent (for at least six months prior to the transplantation is recommended); and

(2) There is no evidence of other major organ debility (e.g., cardiomyopathy); and

(3) There is evidence of ongoing participation in a social support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous; and

(4) There is evidence of a supportive family/social environment.

3. Malignancies metastasized to or extending beyond the margins of the liver.

B. The following are also excluded:

1. Expenses waived by the transplantation center (e.g., beneficiary/sponsor not financially liable).
2. Services and supplies not provided in accordance with applicable program criteria (i.e., part of a grant or research program; unproven procedure).
3. Administration of an unproven immunosuppressant drug that is not FDA approved or has not received approval as an appropriate "off-label" drug indication.
4. Pre- or post-transplantation nonmedical expenses (e.g., out-of-hospital living expenses, to include hotel, meals, privately owned vehicle for the beneficiary or family members).
5. Transportation of an organ donor.

C. Artificial assist devices that are not FDA approved and that are not used in compliance with FDA approved indications.

V. EFFECTIVE DATES

A. For STSF NAS requirement, effective dates will be as indicated in OPM, [Chapter 19](#) (TOM, [Chapter 15](#)). **There will be no STSF NAS required for admissions on or after June 1, 2003.**

- B. November 1, 1994, for hepatitis C.
- C. December 1, 1996, for hepatitis B.

- END -

